POL 14 VIETS

Department of State TELEGRAM

(1065)

Saigon 5726 9-12-67

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EXCISE

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ACTION EA 19

INFO NSCE 00,CIAE 00,SSO 00,DODE 00,USIE 00,NSAE 00,SP 02,SS 35,
GPM 03,SC 01,NSC 10,RSC 01,INR 07,SAL 01,RSR 01,P 04,L 03,H 02,
/089 W

P R 120945Z SEP 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6666
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4219
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2508
AMCONSUL DANANG 945
CINCPAC

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Dean Izumbrew DATE 12/24/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5726

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SAIGON 5648 - Pol 14 Viets

1. CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL (CEC) IS PRESENTLY PREPARING DOCUMENTATION IN RESPONSE TO OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS WHICH HAVE BEEN FILED CHARGING IRREGULARITIES IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, ACCORDING TO [redacted] DOCUMENTATION WILL INCLUDE EXPLANATION OF SITUATION SURROUNDING EACH COMPLAINT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ALL OF WHICH MUST BE PRESENTED BY CEC TO ASSEMBLY BY SEPTEMBER 15. [redacted]

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SAID THAT CEC HAS RECEIVED 15 COMPLAINTS FROM NATIONAL

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ASSEMBLY. (ASSEMBLY SECRETARY-GENAGAL [redacted] SAID THAT ONLY 13 WERE FORWARDED TO CEC) DIFFERENCE PRESUMABLY ONE OF TIMING).

2. OF ALL THE COMPLAINTS, [redacted] CONSIDERED ONLY ONE TO BE SERIOUS: CHARGE IN JOINT COMPLAINT BY EIGHT DEFEATED CANDIDATES THAT TV STATEMENTS BY THIEU AND KY ON ELECTION EVE (BUT FOLLOWING END OF OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD) WERE MADE BY THEM AS CANDIDATES. [redacted] BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT ASSEMBLY WILL ACCEPT CEC'S EXPECTED RECOMMENDATION THAT THIS COMPLAINT BE REJECTED ON GROUNDS THAT THIEU'S AND KY'S STATEMENTS WERE IN THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITIES SINCE THEY MERELY CALLED FOR FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS WHICH COULD HARDLY BE CONSIDERED, [redacted] SAID, TO BE STATEMENTS BY CONTENDERS FOR PRESIDENCY.

3. [redacted] SAID THAT OTHER COMPLAINTS INCLUDE CHARGES OF LACK OF SUFFICIENT BALLOTS, DOUBLE VOTING, AND MANIPULATION OF THE TALLIES, ALL OF WHICH HE FELT WILL BE EASILY DISMISSED. ON THE OTHER HAND, [redacted] ADDED THAT NO COMPLAINT WAS FILED ON MOST QUESTIONABLE PART OF VOTING PROCEDURE THAT OF GENERAL FAILURE OF ELECTION OFFICIALS TO MATCH

VOTING CARDS WITH VOTING LISTS. (NOTE: TRUONG DINH DZU DID FILE COMPLAINT ON THIS POINT AS REPORTED PARA 2 REFTEL.) THIS MATCHING WAS NOT DONE, ACCORDING TO SEVERAL OBSERVERS, BECAUSE IT WAS A CUMBERSOME PROCESS AND WOULD HAVE CONSUMED MUCH ADDITIONAL TIME AT POLLING PLACES. [redacted] CONTENDED THAT HE WOULD HAVE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO DEFEND SUCH A LAX PROCEDURE. AS FOR THE OTHER CHARGES, [redacted] ACKNOWLEDGED SOME IRREGULARITIES IN CERTAIN INSTANCES BUT NONE OF MAGNITUDE GREAT ENOUGH TO WARRANT INVALIDATION OF THE ELECTION SINCE THE FINAL RESULTS WOULD NOT HAVE CHANGED.

4. [redacted] ELABORATED ON PROCESS OF VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING TO SAIGON. SPECIAL COMMISSARIAT FOR ADMINISTRATION (SCA) RECEIVED TALLIES, HE SAID, THROUGH TWO CHANNELS: COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPH AND SCA'S OWN COMMUNICATIONS NET; HOWEVER, TALLIES THROUGH THE TWO CHANNELS DID NOT ALWAYS

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CHECK. FURTHERMORE, CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL RECEIVED SEPARATE SET OF TALLIES THROUGH COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPH FACILITIES, WHICH DIFFERED IN NUMEROUS INSTANCES FROM SCA'S TWO SETS OF FIGURES. TO COMPLICATE MATTERS FURTHER, [redacted] CONTINUED, DOSSIERS WITH COMPLETE RETURNS FROM THE PROVINCES HAVE BEGUN TO ARRIVE IN SAIGON AND HAVE SHOWN ADDITIONAL INCONSISTENCIES WITH OTHER TALLIES. [redacted] STATED THAT NONE OF THE DISCREPANCIES, BOTH FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATE ELECTIONS, WOULD HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE IN IDENTITY OF WINNERS, BUT THEY DO ACCOUNT FOR DELAY IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINAL, OFFICIAL FIGURES. [redacted] WAS EMPHATIC THAT LARGE SWITCHES OF VOTES, SUCH AS THAT INVOLVING TRAN VAN LAM LIST IN SENATE RACE, WERE RESULT OF SLOPPY BOOKKEEPING AND TIRED WORKERS, PRIMARILY DOUBLE ENTRIES WHICH WERE EVENTUALLY CORRECTED. COMPUTERS NOT BEING AVAILABLE, MOST OF THE CALCULATION WAS DONE BY HAND AND CAN BE CHECKED OUT, XUONG CONTENDED, BY ANYONE WHO WISHES TO CHECK THE PROVINCIAL DOSSIERS AS THEY ARRIVE.

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5. ALTHOUGH ALMOST 50 ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES FAILED TO WIN IN UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, [redacted] STATED THAT ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT PREVENT VALIDATION OF ELECTION RESULTS. SOME DEPUTIES ARE RUNNING FOR LOWER HOUSE AND OTHERS ARE SIMPLY NOT CONVINCED, HE BELIEVES, THAT ADEQUATE CASE CAN BE MADE BY ANY OF THE CHARGES. [redacted] NOTED THAT PRIME MOVERS IN MAKING CHARGES APPEAR TO BE SEVERAL

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LISTS WHICH APPARENTLY HAD SUPPORT OF KY INITIALLY BUT WERE NOT PROVIDED FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT BY THIEU-KY DURING CAMPAIGN.

6. IN EVALUATING OVERALL RESULTS OF ELECTIONS, [redacted] SAID THAT DZU IS "REAL WINNER" BECAUSE OF UNEXPECTED SHOWING. HE ATTRIBUTES DZU'S SUCCESS TO TWO FACTORS: HIS EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN, NOT PEACE PLATFORM BUT ATTACKS ON GVN, AND HIS MANNER, WHICH APPEALED TO MANY PEOPLE IN THE PROVINCES; AND TAN DAI VIET ORGANIZATION WHICH, HE

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SAID, HAD ACQUIRED STRENGTH WHEN TAN DAI VIET LEADER NGUYEN TON HOAN AS DEPUTY PREMIER FOR PACIFICATION IN 1964 INSERTED HIS PARTY CADRE IN KEY PACIFICATION POSITIONS. BELIEVES THAT DZU'S POLITICAL STRENGTH WILL CONTINUE TO GROW SINCE, APART FROM THIEU AND KY, NO OTHER POLITICAL FIGURE HAS EMERGED WITH ANY SORT OF STRENGTH OR POPULAR APPEAL. b-1 ed

7. REGARDING LOWER HOUSE CANDIDATES, [redacted] SAID THAT 1,928 HAVE FILED FOR ELECTION. THREE PROVINCES (PHU BON, QUANG NGAI AND ONE OTHER UNIDENTIFIED) HAVE STILL NOT REPORTED. HE WAS NOT SURE WHEN LIST OF CANDIDATES WOULD BE AVAILABLE SINCE PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS AND SCA ARE STILL HEAVILY

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INVOLVED WITH TALLYING PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL ELECTION RETURNS AND DEALING WITH COMPLAINT PROIGSS. HE SIGHED COMFORTABLY WHEN MK NOTED THAT AT LEAST SCA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PRINTING BALLOTS FOR
LOWER HOUSE CANDIDATES. (RESPONSIBILITY REST WITH EACH PROVINCE).

8. [redacted] ADDED THAT SCA IS TENTATIVELY PROGRAMMING ELECTIONS FOR MAYOR IN 1969 AND FOR PROVINCE CHIEFS THE YEAR AFTER. IN THE MEANTIME, HE ADDED, HE EXPECTED THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL BEGIN AT AN EARLY DATE TO APPOINT SOME CIVILIAN PROVINCE CHIEFS ON A SELECTIVE BASIS.

9. COMMENT: [redacted] WHO HAS HAD A KEY ROLE IN ENTIRE ELECTORAL PROCESS, APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT ASSEMBLY REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS WILL NOT JEOPARDIZE ELECTION RESULTS, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY SERVE

SOME SHORT-TERM POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OF VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS DZU. SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS EXPECTED TO MAKE FORMAL STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 12 IN FORM OF VIETNAM PRESS INTERVIEW, REFUTING CHARGES OF POORLY-ADMINISTERED ELECTION PROCEDURE AND VOTE-COUNTING. SCA IS APPARENTLY GOING TO RELY HEAVILY ON FULL EXPOSURE OF PROCEDURES, SUPPLEMENTED BY DOSSIERS OF PROVINCIAL VOTE TALLIES, TO MINIMIZE EFFECTS OF CHARGES CURRENTLY BEING MADE.

GP-3. BUNKER